

National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

Brief of Accident

Adopted 01/16/2003

DEN02LA064 File No. 12599	06/29/2002	Cortez, CO	Aircraft Reg No. N404B	Time (Local): 10:13 MDT		
Make/Model:	Beech / 35			Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	Continental / E-185-1		Crew	0	0	1
Aircraft Damage:	Substantial		Pass	0	1	0
Number of Engines:	1					
Operating Certificate(s):	None					
Type of Flight Operation:	Personal					
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 91: General Aviation					
Last Depart. Point: Tucson, AZ				Condition of Light: Day		
Destination: Cortez, CO				Weather Info Src: Weather Observation Facility		
Airport Proximity: Off Airport/Airstrip				Basic Weather: Visual Conditions		
				Lowest Ceiling: None		
				Visibility: 10.00 SM		
				Wind Dir/Speed: Calm		
				Temperature (°C): 26		
				Precip/Obscuration: None / None		
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 49	Flight Time (Hours)				
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)		Total All Aircraft: 731				
Student; Single-engine Land		Last 90 Days: 30				
Instrument Ratings		Total Make/Model: Unk/Nr				
None		Total Instrument Time: UnK/Nr				

The pilot took off at 0638, drawing fuel from the left main tank. At 0739, he switched to the right main tank. At 0840, he switched to the auxiliary fuel tank. As he approached his destination, the pilot noted that the main fuel tanks were half full and the auxiliary fuel tank was over half full. He reduced power and began a slow descent. As he approached the traffic pattern, he switched back to the left main fuel tank. On approach, he lowered the landing gear and as he started to lower the flaps, he noticed the airspeed had decreased so he added power. The airplane "started to wobble and became hard to handle," so the pilot applied full power. The airspeed "was not responding very quickly." He confirmed the fuel selector was on the left tank and the fuel boost pump was on. After clearing a rock wall cliff and ravine, the pilot flew underneath power lines and the airplane struck the ground. Flow testing of the carburetor at 10 pounds psi revealed an external leak at the idle diaphragm. Further tests indicated the carburetor would run rich at low power settings and lean at high power settings. The fuel pump was able to maintain 20 gph at 10 psi and 500 rpm. At 1,000 rpm, a leak was noted at the lower splitline surface. At 2,500 rpm, the fuel pump maintained 160 gph at 12 psi.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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Occurrence #1: LOSS OF ENGINE POWER(PARTIAL) - MECH FAILURE/MALF
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - FINAL APPROACH

Findings

1. (F) REASON FOR OCCURRENCE UNDETERMINED
 2. (F) FUEL SYSTEM,CARBURETOR - LEAK
 3. (F) FUEL SYSTEM,PUMP - LEAK
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Occurrence #2: LOSS OF CONTROL - IN FLIGHT
Phase of Operation: APPROACH - VFR PATTERN - BASE LEG/BASE TO FINAL

Findings

4. (C) STALL - INADVERTENT - PILOT IN COMMAND
 5. TERRAIN CONDITION - CLIFF
 6. TERRAIN CONDITION - RAVINE
 7. OBJECT - WIRE,TRANSMISSION
-

Occurrence #3: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER
Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings

8. TERRAIN CONDITION - GROUND

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.
an inadvertent stall as the pilot attempted to clear a cliff and ravine and avoid power lines, resulting in a collision with the ground.
Contributing factors were a loss of engine power for undetermined reasons, a leaking carburetor and fuel pump, and the cliff, ravine, and power lines.